

REMARKS

An Excess Claim Fee Payment Letter is submitted herewith to cover the cost of (two) 2 excess independent claims.

Allowable claims 3-4, 6-7, 9-10, 12-13, 15-30, 33 and 35-36 are all the claims presently pending in the application. Rejected claims 1-2, 5, 8, 11, 14, 31-32 and 34 have been canceled, and all of the pending claims have been amended.

Applicant gratefully acknowledges that claims 3, 5-6, 8-9, 11-12, 14-30, 33 and 35-36 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form. Applicant notes that claims 3, 16, 33 and 35 have been rewritten in independent form and are, therefore, in condition for immediate allowance. Applicant further notes that allowable claims 5, 8, 11 and 14 have been canceled and their subject matter has been incorporated into claim 4, which has been rewritten in independent form. Therefore, claim 4 and its dependent claims are in condition for immediate allowance.

It is noted that the claim amendments are made only for more particularly pointing out the invention, and not for distinguishing the invention over the prior art, narrowing the claims or for any statutory requirements of patentability. Further, Applicant specifically states that no amendment to any claim herein should be construed as a disclaimer of any interest in or right to an equivalent of any element or feature.

The title has been amended to be more indicative of the invention to which the claims pertain and to overcome the Examiner's objection to the title.

In view of the foregoing, Applicant submits that claims 3-4, 6-7, 9-10, 12-13, 15-30, 33 and 35-36, all the claims presently pending in the application, are patentably distinct over the prior art of record and are in condition for allowance. The Examiner is respectfully requested to pass the above application to issue at the earliest possible time.

Should the Examiner find the application to be other than in condition for allowance, the Examiner is requested to contact the undersigned at the local telephone number listed below to discuss any other changes deemed necessary in a telephonic or personal interview.

Serial No. 09/924,001
Docket No. NEC01P162-MHe

11

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any deficiency in fees or to credit any overpayment in fees to Attorney's Deposit Account No. 50-0481.

Respectfully Submitted,

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